

TITLE 21 - OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

CHAPTER 46 - PHARMACY

Notice is hereby given in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.2 that the Board of Pharmacy intends to amend the rule cited as 21 NCAC 46 .1418.

Link to agency website pursuant to G.S. 150B-19.1(c): <https://www.ncbop.org/rulemakings.htm>

Proposed Effective Date: May 1, 2026

Public Hearing:

Date: December 1, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: North Carolina Board of Pharmacy, 6015 Farrington Road, Suite 201, Chapel Hill, NC 27517.

Reason for Proposed Action: *The Board of Pharmacy proposes amending this rule to expand health care facilities' discretion in employing their pharmacy technicians in several ways. These proposed amendments are the culmination of a two-year process of a Board working group that included representatives of a wide variety of health care facility pharmacies, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, hospice and others.*

The rule currently sets out certain functions that can be performed in hospitals by "validating technicians," which was the defined term that the Board used to describe technicians that the Board determined had the knowledge to perform those specific tasks.

First, the industry experts recommended expansion of the tasks that validating technicians may perform under the oversight of a health care facility pharmacist. The amendment proposes to increase the ability of those technicians to confirm that automated devices have functioned as intended in dispensing or preparing drugs, given that the technology has an extremely high accuracy rate, and that the drugs still must be reviewed by a pharmacist as safe and effective for the patient. The amendment further proposes to allow technicians to validate the preparation and packaging of large-batch, low-risk, non-patient-specific products.

Second, the proposed amendment would increase the number of technicians who can serve as validating technicians. At the time of the initial rule, an associate's degree in pharmacy technology was the only available credential with adequate assurances that technicians could perform the tasks set out in the rule. However, the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board has since created certification programs for a variety of technician competencies and tasks. The working group carefully considered the components of those programs and whether (and which of) those programs are adequate preparation for certain tasks. The proposed amendment reflects that judgment. Furthermore, the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board programs are accessible to any technician, rather than only those technicians who have the ability to attend an associate's degree program. North Carolina already leads the country in the number of technicians holding these certifications, and the proposed amendment would recognize their qualifications to perform these tasks.

Third, the current rule is limited to hospital pharmacies and technicians. The proposed amendment would expand to include all health care facilities that are addressed in the relevant section and defined in 21 NCAC 46 .1317. The original rule was limited, as it arose out of a pilot program involving three hospitals. With over fourteen years of experience under the rule, the working group recommended that there were no relevant differences among any of the types of health care facilities.

Comments may be submitted to: Jay Campbell, North Carolina Board of Pharmacy, 6015 Farrington Road, Suite 201, Chapel Hill, NC 27517; email ncboprulemaking@ncbop.org

Comment period ends: December 15, 2025

Procedure for Subjecting a Proposed Rule to Legislative Review: If an objection is not resolved prior to the adoption of the rule, a person may also submit a written objection to the Rules Review Commission. If the Rules Review Commission receives written and signed objections after the adoption of the Rule in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.3(b2) from 10 or more persons clearly requesting review by the legislature and the Rules Review Commission approves the rule, the rule will become effective as provided in G.S. 150B-21.3(b1). The Commission will receive written objections until 5:00 p.m. on the day following the day the Commission approves the rule. The Commission will receive letters via U.S. Mail, private courier service, or hand delivery to 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh, North Carolina, or via email to oah.rules@oah.nc.gov. If you have any further questions concerning the submission of objections to the Commission, please review 26 NCAC 05 .0110 or call a Commission staff attorney at 984-236-1850.

Fiscal impact. Does any rule or combination of rules in this notice create an economic impact? Check all that apply.

- ☐ State funds affected
- ☐ Local funds affected
- ☐ Substantial economic impact (\geq \$1,000,000)
- ☐ Approved by OSBM

SECTION .1400 - HOSPITALS: OTHER HEALTH FACILITIES

21 NCAC 46 .1418 HEALTH CARE FACILITY PHARMACY TECHNICIANS SUPERVISION OF UNIT DOSE MEDICATION SYSTEMS

~~(a) The purpose of this Section is to set out requirements in the event that pharmacists elect to supervise designated pharmacy technicians' validation of stocking and prepackaging functions in acute care hospital pharmacy practice settings as a means of facilitating pharmacists' delivery of clinical services.~~

~~(b) A Hospital's pharmacist manager is responsible for the oversight of all validation of floor stock and unit dose distribution systems, and that responsibility may not be delegated pursuant to 21 NCAC 46 .1411. In the event that the Hospital's pharmacist manager elects to utilize Validating Technicians in the filling of floor stock and unit dose distribution systems, the pharmacist manager shall develop written policies and procedures that:~~

- ~~(1) permit a Validating Technician to validate only the following functions of other registered pharmacy technicians in filling floor stock and unit dose distribution systems for inpatients in a Hospital:~~
 - ~~(A) stocking of patient care unit medication inventories;~~
 - ~~(B) stocking of ancillary drug cabinet inventories;~~
 - ~~(C) stocking of automated dispensing or drug supply devices;~~
 - ~~(D) stocking of emergency kits; and~~
 - ~~(E) prepackaging of prescription drugs within the Hospital pharmacy;~~
- ~~(2) establish the parameters for pharmacist supervision of pharmacy technician validation functions;~~
- ~~(3) establish facility-specific training for pharmacy technician validation functions;~~
- ~~(4) establish an ongoing evaluation and assessment program to ensure that pharmacy technician validation functions are performed safely and accurately; and~~
- ~~(5) establish a recordkeeping system that shall permit the identification of the Validating Technician who performs activities authorized by this Rule. Readily retrievable records generated by this system shall be maintained for the period of time specified in 21 NCAC 46 .1414(j)(1) and (2).~~

~~(c) With respect to compounded or admixed prescription drugs (whether sterile or non-sterile), a Validating Technician may validate the filling of floor stock and unit dose distribution systems only after a pharmacist has verified that the compounded or admixed prescription drugs have been prepared correctly.~~

~~(d) This Rule does not authorize a pharmacy technician to perform any act requiring the exercise of professional judgment by a pharmacist.~~

~~(e) Validating Technician.~~ For the purposes of this Rule, a "Validating Technician" shall be a pharmacy technician who:

- ~~(1) is registered with the Board and trained as specified in G.S. 90-85.15A;~~
- ~~(2) is a certified technician;~~
- ~~(3) is employed by a Health Care Facility pharmacy; and~~
- ~~(4) holds either:~~
 - ~~(A) holds an associate's degree in pharmacy technology conferred by one of the following: either~~
 - ~~(i) an institution within the North Carolina Community College System or University System;~~
 - ~~(ii) (B) an associate's degree in pharmacy technology conferred by an institution accredited by one of the regional accrediting agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education; or~~
 - ~~(iii) (C) an associate's degree in pharmacy technology conferred by a program accredited by the American Society of Health System Pharmacists; and or~~
 - ~~(B) holds a current Advanced Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT-Adv) credential from the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB), and also holds a current Technician Product Verification Certificate either as part of or in addition to the CPhT-Adv credential. The Subparagraphs in this Rule may require other specific certifications for functions described in those Subparagraphs.~~
- ~~(4) assists pharmacists with the preparation, dispensing and distribution of prescription medications that will be administered by a licensed health care provider to an inpatient in a Hospital under this Rule.~~

~~(b) A Health Care Facility may utilize Validating Technicians to validate the following functions for a Health Care Facility pharmacy:~~

- ~~(1) stocking of patient care unit medication inventories;~~
- ~~(2) stocking of ancillary drug cabinet inventories;~~
- ~~(3) stocking of automated dispensing or drug supply devices;~~
- ~~(4) stocking of emergency kits;~~
- ~~(5) prepackaging of prescription drugs within the Health Care Facility pharmacy;~~
- ~~(6) selection of the correct dose by an automated medication system that has been stocked and restocked in compliance with 21 NCAC 46 .3404, only in the following circumstances:~~
 - ~~(A) If a pharmacist has performed a Drug Regimen Review to ensure that dispensing the order is safe and effective for the patient, and that the requirements of 21 NCAC 46. 1414 have been met; and~~
 - ~~(B) If the order has not changed following the Drug Regimen Review and review for compliance with 21 NCAC 46 .1414;~~
- ~~(7) preparation of a product by an automated compounding device, only in the following circumstances:~~

- (A) If the technician qualifies as a Validating Technician by virtue of holding the certifications set out in Paragraph (a)(4)(B) of this Rule, in addition to those qualifications, the Validating Technician must hold a current Certified Compounded Sterile Preparation Technician credential from the PTCB. If the technician qualifies as a Validating Technician by virtue of the educational requirements set out in Paragraph (a)(4)(A) of this Rule, the technician is not required to hold this credential;
- (B) A Health Care Facility pharmacist must prepare the automated compounding device to compound the appropriate compounded product; and
- (C) The automated compounding device must automatically measure and compound the components for the compounded product, and must keep and maintain records of all steps in the compounding process; or
- (8) validating the preparation and repackaging by other registered pharmacy technicians of non-sterile low-risk products that are compounded in multi-patient volume and whose composition does not vary by patient. If the technician qualifies as a Validating Technician by virtue of holding the certifications set out in Paragraph (a)(4)(B) of this Rule, in addition to those qualifications, the Validating Technician must hold a current Nonsterile Compounding Certificate from the PTCB, either as part of or in addition to the CPhT-Adv credential. If the technician qualifies as a Validating Technician by virtue of the educational requirements set out in Paragraph (a)(4)(A) of this Rule, the technician is not required to hold this credential.

(c) If the Health Care Facility elects to utilize Validating Technicians for functions described in this Rule, the pharmacist-manager shall develop written policies and procedures that:

- (1) establish the parameters for pharmacist supervision of pharmacy technician validation functions;
- (2) establish facility-specific training for pharmacy technician validation functions;
- (3) establish an ongoing evaluation and assessment program to ensure that pharmacy technician validation functions are performed safely and accurately; and
- (4) establish a recordkeeping system that shall permit the identification of the Validating Technician who performs activities authorized by this Rule. Readily retrievable records generated by this system shall be maintained for the period of time specified in 21 NCAC 46 .1414(j)(1) and (2).

(d) A Health Care Facility's pharmacist-manager is responsible for the oversight of all validation functions, and that responsibility may not be delegated pursuant to 21 NCAC 46 .1411. This Rule does not permit a pharmacy technician to perform any act requiring the exercise of professional judgment by a pharmacist.

(f) Hospital. For the purposes of this Rule, a Hospital is either:

- (1) a hospital licensed by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission; or
- (2) a psychiatric hospital operated by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

(g)(e) Pursuant to G.S. 90-85.15A(c), the Board approves a pharmacist's supervision of more than two pharmacy technicians where the additional technicians are Validating Technicians. This Rule does not relieve the pharmacist-manager of the obligation to request and receive written Board approval for a pharmacist's supervision of more than two pharmacy technicians where the additional technicians are certified pharmacy technicians but are not Validating Technicians.

(h) A pharmacy technician performing validation functions described in this Rule as part of a Board approved 21 NCAC 46 .2510 pilot project at Broughton State Hospital or Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center may continue to perform such functions for a period of three years from this Rule's original effective date, after which time the pharmacy technician must meet all of the requirements specified in Paragraph (e) of this Rule to continue performing such functions.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 90-85.6; 90-85.15A; 90-85.21; 90-85.26; 90-85.32; 90-85.33; 90-85.34;
Eff. June 18, 2011;*

*Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. October 3, 2017; 2017.
Amended Eff. May 1, 2026.*